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ABSTRACT

A project in which student groups create a 10-minute radio broadcast consisting of a song, commercials, a news report, and a commentary is presented. The purpose of the project is to teach students to be selective media users while also teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The teacher introduction offers suggestions for carrying out the project and lists concepts related to each part of the broadcast. Instructional materials include: creative writing assignments and other activities which illustrate that different methods of communication are used with different audiences; worksheets to be completed for each part of the broadcast; an exercise on communications skills needed for different occupations; exercises related to advertising techniques, to the differences between fact and opinion in news reporting, and to persuasive techniques used in commentaries; and a form to be used for the script of the broadcast. This document is part of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center project. (DC)

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LANGUAGE ARTS PROJECT:

RADIO PROGRAM PRODUCTION

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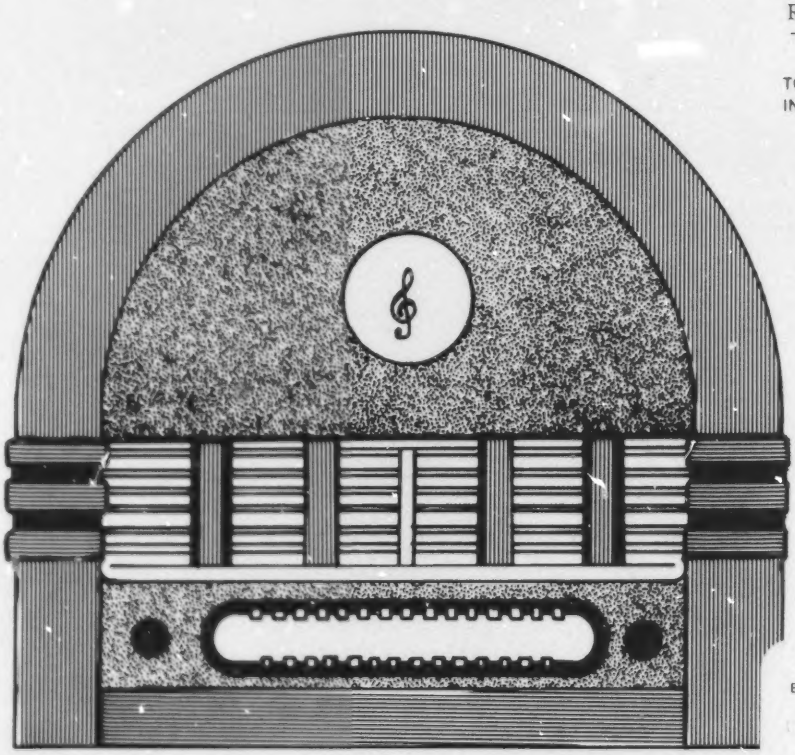

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AREA EDUCATION AGENCY 7

Cedar Falls, Iowa

Document title: Language Arts Project: Radio Program Production

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Teacher Center Director - Diane Gibson, Ed. D.

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RADIO PROGRAM PRODUCTION

Over the last fifty years, our society has changed its media "eating" habits. From a basically print-oriented society, we have come to rely heavily on electronic media. Electronic media has become so persuasive, in fact, that a significant part of most people's daily lives are spent "communicating" with an electronic source.

Because of this constant exposure, one basic concern of a langauge arts curriculum should be to help students learn to deal with the media as effectively as possible. A language arts goal should be to teach students to be careful, selective media users, and not media "soakers".

Given this need, I designed the following language arts experience to provide students a chance to think about what they absorb through electronic media. This project deals with radio-no doubt an important portion of a young teenager's media consumption.

Within the framework of a media analysis, this project very practically addresses itself to reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. And for these skills, learning by doing is essential. The form of this project, that of a 10 minute radio program, is a motivating format for the practice of these skills.

This packet of material is designed to aid you in preparing a unit in which the students produce a "radio program". It has been prepared so that you may deal with each aspect as thoroughly as you wish.

The project assignment is to develop and produce a 10 minute radio program which includes the following components:

1. Song
2. 2-3 Commercials
3. 1 news report (minimum length-1 minute)
4. 1 commentary (minimum length-1 minute)

The packet is divided into five parts-each part dealing with one component and topics related to it.

I	Introduction to project and song.	1) Good language skills are important to all adults, regardless of profession. 2) People change their language to fit their situation.
A	Advertising	1) Words have connotation that are important to know when communicating. 2) Advertisers use various techniques to get people to buy their products. 3) A careful consumer knows the facts about products, and does not buy them because of good advertising.
N	News	1) It is important to be able to distinguish facts from opinions. 2) It is important to think about the news you hear and read, and not accept it without thought. 3) There are different kinds of news with different audiences in mind.
C	Commentary	1) An editorial uses certain words to make its point. 2) It is important to think about editorials before agreeing or disagreeing with them.
P	Production	1) It is important to speak clearly and audibly. 2) It is important to write clearly and carefully.

At the end of each part of the packet is a worksheet labeled with a letter only (no accompanying number). The completion of all of these sheets by the group indicates the completion of the written work for the project and means that the group is ready to tape the radio program.

I preferred to set a deadline for each assignment sheet as we discussed each part. I felt that this would help to keep students on task. It is not necessary, however, that this be done.

The box at the bottom of each page can be checked or graded upon completion-to give both teacher and student a quick check on progress.

I preferred that each student in each group complete the assignment packet-partly to insure participation, but also to reinforce writing skills and involve each student in a thinking process related to the material for that part of the packet.

I would also suggest that at the end of the packet a taping sign up sheet be posted. Before signing up, each member's assignment sheet packet must be completed. This will assure that the group is ready to tape. By placing a deadline on taping through the sign up sheet, an automatic deadline is made, then, for completion of the packet.

Evaluation of each radio program can be made by the teacher only or by all students through the use of a rating sheet.

Creative Writing Assignments

Project Part	Creative Writing Assignment
I	1. Write a thank-you letter, letter of invitation or friendly letter to a six-year-old friend. Then write another letter containing the same information to your grandfather or grandmother. 2. Write a paragraph about Saturday night's party for your parents. 3. Write about Sunday's football game for football fans. Then write about the game for all people who know nothing about football. 4. Describe this winter to a friend who has moved to California. Then describe it to a cousin who has never been north of Dallas, Texas.
A	1. Write a letter to a prospective employer-telling him or her why you're "perfect" for the job. 2. Write an advertisement for a useless, make believe product. How could you make people believe they needed it? 3. Brainstorm fifty ways to say_____. 4. Using the most delicate language possible, write a letter to your great aunt telling her you really like the sweater she gave you which you really hate.

Creative Writing

N	1. Pretend you could interview anyone you wanted. Write this interview. 2. Now that you've become famous, everyone wants to interview you. Write how that interview would go. 3. Pretend you were on the scene during a famous historical event. Write about the event as an "on the scene reporter". 4. Cover a news story in your school.
C	1. Find an editorial with which you disagree. Write a letter to the editor about your point of view. 2. Write a letter persuading your parents to let you do something you are not allowed to do. 3. Write a letter to the editor about a topic you feel strongly. 4. Write a letter to a Congressperson stating your opinion on a topic.

Summary: When you complete this packet, you will have created and produced a "radio program" which is about 10 minutes in length. It will include the following

1. song
2. 2-3 commercials
3. 1 news report (minimum length-1 minute)
4. 1 commentary (minimum length-1 minute)

Grading: You will be evaluated as follows:

Procedure:

_____

People in group:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Chairperson:_____

Audience:_____

Song title:_____

Song length:_____

Song introduction:_____

Listed below are many types of jobs. For each job, decide whether good reading, writing, speaking or listening skills are needed or useful.

TV Announcer	Teacher
Army Sergeant	Surveyor
Shipping Clerk	Firefighter
Receptionist	Nurse
Filing Clerk	Cashier
Homemaker	Dentist
Garage Mechanic	Writer
Stenographer	Artist
Radio Announcer	Disc Jockey
Telephone Operator	Actor, Actress
Priests, Ministers, Rabbi	Waiter, Waitress
Taxicab Drivers	Musician
Mechanical Engineers	Farmer

Questions to discuss:

Can you think of any profession in which good lanauage skills are not important or useful?

Why do we need good language skills outside the working world?

The language we use changes depending on the situation we find ourselves in. We speak one way at home and another way when we're at school or working. And each kind of work often has its own special language. For each of the following examples of speech, try to identify who's saying it and the situation it is said in.

What is said	Person	Situation
1. Scramble two and go easy on the butter.		
2. Do you want me to use clippers on the sides?		
3. My trailer jack-knifed as I rounded a curve on the thruway.		
4. I'll win by a knockout in the sixth.		
5. We would be honored, sir, by your presence at dinner on Sunday.		
6. Come over for lunch if you can.		

Questions to discuss:

1. How do you change your speech when you are talking to different people. (a friend, a teacher, a parent).
2. Why do we need to be aware of the audience we are speaking to?

Have students listen to 2 or 3 different radio programs and compare them in terms of language use and the audience the program is intended for. A good comparison is between a commercial radio program and a program on public radio. The following form is a convenient structure for this activity. Program samples can be taped or students can fill in the chart by listening on their own.

Time Listened To	Station	Kind of Program	Audience Intended For

Invite a speaker from a local radio station to speak to the class about radio programming, audience, language use, etc. To motivate the students, have them listen to this person's program on the radio before the visit. (This could be taped and played in class, or could be done by the students as a homework assignment.)

Discuss the person's radio voice, langauge usage, choice of program material, etc. Discuss how this might change if the program was aimed at a different audience.

A

Products you are going to advertise and time length of each:

	Product	Time
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

Commercisls: (if there is not enough space here, continue your ad on a piece of notebook paper.)

1. _____

_____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

_____

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CONNOTATION IN ADVERTISING

And Now a Message of Importance to You

IT'S the "IN" shop! It's new, kitty cat! And it's crammed with goodies for lively young fashion buffs who think about style, think small about size, know pure pizzazz when they see it! Skitter down and go wild about the wow styles, artfully, exclusively yours.

After reading the above ad, would you like to visit the "IN" shop? Which phrases attract you? Is anything left out that you'd care to know?

Ad writers—those wide-awake salesmen—are experts at predicting how we will react to certain words. They know which words will call up a favorable or an unfavorable response, and which words may have no effect at all. They make full use of the connotative powers of language.

Here are two other ads that are rich in connotation. Both appeal to the reader's feelings while saying little about the product.

For lipstick: *The cider-sweet shimmer of autumn captured in a sable-cuffed collector's item . . . sunset's shining hour . . . a halo of candlelight . . . glimmerglows.*

For after-shave: *This cologne swaggers. As robust as a buccaneer chanty, yet as refreshing as dusk at sea . . . blended of the essence of true West Indian limes with tropical woody spices added. Each bottle has a handwoven jacket of palm frond.*

Even the brand name of a product can motivate us to buy. Can you give some brand names that are rich in suggestion?

My Mother, The Advertiser

At times, the pleasing connotations of words that sound good can short-circuit our powers of critical thinking.

The word *mother* has strongly favorable associations for most people. The goodness of mother as a human being carries over to the word itself and to any word or thing attached to it. Thus we have such words as *motherhood, mother love, mother tongue,* and so on—all favorably connotative words.

The idea of mother has been put to use by advertisers to sell everything from pills to pies. In this function the "good word" serves to short-circuit any critical thinking about the subject to which it is attached.

How many products can you think of that attach themselves to "mother," either in their name or in their advertising?

ON THE RIGHT SCENT

At one time men were "men," and deodorants were for women only. The advertising agencies were challenged to come up with a solution for selling men's deodorants. Here's one adman's solution.

A Counter Sign That Sells

One day Drs. Beaver and Gibbs, of the People's Drugstores of Washington, D.C., informed us they wanted to get men to begin using an underarm deodorant to prevent perspiration odor. If men could be induced to use this product, a brand-new market would be developed overnight.

We told them it would be easy. We would instruct the salesgirls to have their customers teach their husbands the many advantages of a deodorant. Then the bottle would be used twice as fast in the home, and the women would be back more often.

A Sad Experience

A fine theory, but what a sad experience! The salesgirl would say to a buyer of a deodorant, "Why not teach your husband its many advantages, madam?"

The customer would come back with, "What makes you think I have a husband?" Or, "What makes you think he needs it, young lady?"

We then tried several ideas at the cigar counters—man-to-man stuff. But again we experienced difficulty. A man would buy some cigars, and the clerk would simply say, "How about some deodorant today, sir?"

"No thanks," the man would reply. "My wife uses Flit." He didn't even know what a deodorant was! When he found out, he was insulted, wondering why the clerk suggested it to him!

The 'He-Man' Appeal

Finally we placed a sign on the cigar counter reading: "For men." In front of the sign we placed a bar of Lifebuoy soap and a bottle of Odorono. The Lifebuoy suggested the use of the Odorono, for men do read the ads showing he-men who use Lifebuoy. Instinctively, they felt the bottle on the counter was for the same purpose. They would shyly pick it up and ask, "What is this?"

The clerk would say: "It's for excessive perspiration!"

The sign stopped four out of every ten men at the cigar counters!

One day we changed the sign to read: "For Active Men!" Then it stopped six out of ten men; for all men—the short, the tall, the poor, and the wealthy—believing themselves to be active men, would rush to the counter, pick up the bottle, and ask, "What is this!"

Here is proof of the great power of words properly chosen—even on counter signs!

—From *Tested Sentences That Sell*, by Elmer Wheeler. Reprinted by permission.

10

from-Semantics 3, Understanding Language by Thomas Born

CONNOTATION IN PERSUASION

Snarling and Purring With Words

AROMA, Mother . . . not stench!" argued the offended son in the cartoon. No cigar smoker feels that his cigar gives off a "stench," just as no cigar hater would call the smell of a cigar an "aroma."

So what is the word for cigar smoke? Is it a stench or an aroma? As a matter of fact, it isn't either one.

Neither *aroma* nor *stench* reveals the "truth" about cigar smoke. What each word does reveal is the speaker's attitude toward cigars and the way he feels about the smoke.

Surly Snarling and Approving Purring

If you yourself were to choose *aroma*, you would be "purring" at cigar smoke. You would show that you approve of it, and that you want your listener to approve as well. If you were to choose *stench*, you would be "snarling" at cigar smoke. You would show that you disapprove of it, and that you want your listener to disapprove as well.

Do you see the power of connotation in expressing and shaping feelings and attitudes? Your choice of a particular word doesn't change real-life facts. Cigar smoke remains simply cigar smoke, no matter what you call it. But in your choice of one word over another, you reveal your own feelings, while you try to get your listener to feel the same way.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS

Throughout this book, we've been looking at words with built-in emotions. We've seen examples of words with connotations that we all respond to in much the same way.

As Snoopy would agree, "Words that mean the same thing may *not* mean the same thing." Any one of a number of synonyms may be used to refer to the same thing in the real world. Yet each synonym has its own shade of feeling, its own connotation.

At times these shades of feeling in synonyms are as far apart as sunshine and shadow. You'll see what we mean in the exercise below.

JOHN DOE vs. JEKYLL-HYDE

As an American, you have probably heard of America's average man, the mythical John Doe. And of course you have feelings and opinions about him.

At times you may be the purring Dr. Jekyll who approves of John Doe. But at other moments you may be the snarling Mr. Hyde who disapproves of John.

Right now, pretend that you are Dr. Jekyll *and* Mr. Hyde and that both of you are discussing John Doe.

PURRING
DR. JEKYLL SAYS

SNARLING
MR. HYDE SAYS

JOHN DOE IS . . . (Write in the word or words)		JOHN DOE IS . . .
1. _____	quick-witted smart-alecky	_____
2. _____	cunning skillful	_____
3. _____	freakish original	_____
4. _____	haughty proud	_____
5. _____	conceited self-assured	_____
6. _____	touchy sensitive	_____
7. _____	frank tactless	_____
8. _____	youthful immature	_____
9. _____	muleheaded firm	_____
10. _____	brave rash	_____

Have you changed the character of John by calling him "smart-alecky" instead of "quick-witted"? No, John remains John, whatever you call him.

Words like these are charged with high voltage. They can be dangerous if they lead you or anyone else to confuse hard facts with personal feelings.

from-Semantics 3, Understanding Language by Thomas Born

Discuss propaganda techniques in advertising. The Houghton-Mifflin Galaxies book has a basic, but good section on propaganda techniques on pp. 460-466.

After reading and discussing the different techniques, students should find examples of each propaganda technique in a magazine ad.

Samples of each of these techniques on radio and television broadcasts can be taped, then listened to by the class for analysis and discussion.

1. One of the main purposes of advertising is to create in us automatic reactions to brand names. The advertiser expects us to act as if the name of the thing is the thing itself.

   So we are urged not to ask for a bar of soap, but for Dial; not for a tissue, but for a Kleenex.

   Make a collection of the ads that try to set up an automatic reaction to a brand name.

2. Collect a group of ads from one general field-cars, perfumes-whatever you want.

   Find the selling points that the writer wishes to impress on you. How does he use connotation to get you to buy?

   What are the popular words in your ads? How many hard facts can you find in each ad?

N

1. What is the subject of your news report?

_____

2. Is your news report local, national or world in scope?

_____

3. What is the time length of your news report?

_____

4. Write your news report below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Discuss the difference between fact and opinion. Bring examples of fact from the newspaper and discuss opinion and their roles in the news.

Use the Building English Skills books for extra practice on distinguishing between fact and opinion.

Building English Skills, Green: pp. 146-152

U.S. News Media

In the United States, the news media is free to report whatever it wants. We say that our press is a "free press". However there are certain things that the news media can't or doesn't want to print or broadcast. For example, if it makes false statements about people it can be sued for libel. Libel is the publishing of malicious statements about people.

Responsible news reporters censor themselves. This means they try to avoid printing or broadcasting anything that is of a scandalous or immoral nature. Good news reporters pride themselves on trying to print or broadcast only the news that they think is fit to report.

A good news reporter is careful to be as accurate and reliable in his or her reporting as possible. How can you be sure that a news report is accurate and reliable? You can't always be sure. You can be aware though of the reputation of the news report you're reading or listening to. Some news reports are known for the way in which they distort or change the news.

When a reliable news report makes an inaccurate statement, and then finds out about it, it makes a retraction. A retraction is a withdrawing or taking back of a statement that was previously made.

Another way of checking the accuracy of a news report is to be aware of the source of the story. To do this, you can ask yourself these questions: Is the news reporter a reliable reporter? Is the place where the story's coming from a reliable source of information?

Questions to discuss:

1. Why is it important to distinguish between fact and opinion in writing a news report or listening to or reading a news report?
2. What is a retraction and why is it used?
3. How can you check the reliability and accuracy of news reports?

Tape examples of various kinds of news- sports, weather, local, national, world. Discuss the various audiences each is intended for.

Look closely at a news clipping from a newspaper. Discuss it in terms of: audience, fact vs. opinion, news source, and words with strong connotation.

Find an example of each of the following types of news in a newspaper or magazine. Tape or glue the article in the correct block. Then fill in each of the other blanks appropriately.

Kind of News Report	Audience Intended For	Are there any opinions stated? If so, list them.	List the words used that have a connotation (good or bad)
Local			
National			
World			

C

1. What is the subject of your commentary?

2. What is the time length of your commentary?

3 Write your commentary below:

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EDITORIALS

In its editorials, a newspaper tells its readers what to think or what to do. An editorial can be a very powerful weapon. It can change the way we think about things or get us to take some kind of action.

Below is an editorial that appeared in the New York Times, one of the world's great newspapers. Read the editorial carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

The Federal Communications Commission is the agency responsible for regulating radio and TV stations under the law, but the White House is elbowing it aside in a crude effort to call the signals on what can reach the American people.

After an election campaign cease-fire, the White House czar for broadcasting, Clay T. Whitehead, head of the Office of Telecommunications Policy, has returned to the attack. In a speech to a journalsim society, he has accused unnamed reporters of something called "ideological plugola" and announced the Administration's intent to sponsor legislation which would in effect permit the White House to discipline broadcasters who stray from the White House party line. Who is to decide when a journalist is delivering what the White House TV arbiter brands "elitist gossip in the guise of news analysis"?-who, but the head of the Office of Telecommunications Policy, acting for the President himself.

Mr. Whitehead's speech was wrapped inside an Administration plan to make the stations and their owners directly responsible for the network programs they carry and to insure a variety of conflicting views on controversial issues. The requirement of balance, fairness and access already exists with F.C.C. regulations; they are already a factor for assessment when stations come up for license renewal.

But Mr. Whitehead is delivering a different message. He is telling the affiliated stations of the commercial networks to censor major news programs and documentaries that offend the Administration. And he is doing so under the guide of interpreting the First Amendment as it applies to broadcasting news. That is the road to censorship and suppression through abuse of the power to license. It is a road Congress cannot let the Administration travel.

(c) 1972 by the New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

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1. What agency is responsible for regulating radio and TV stations under the law?

   _____

2. When the editorial was written, who was head of the Office of Telecommunications Policy?_____

3. To what group did Mr. Whitehead give his speech?_____

4. Whom did Mr. Whitehead accuse of "ideological plugola"?

   _____

5. The editorial points out that the head of the Office of Telecommunications Policy would be acting for whom?

   _____

6. The editorial explains that the requirement of balance, fairness, and acess already exists where?

_____

7. The editorial says that Mr. Whitehead is telling stations of the commercial networks to censor what?

_____

8. Do you find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the opinions that are expressed in the editorial?

_____

from The Newspapers You Read, by Richard H. Turner

EUPHEMISTIC LANGUAGE

EUPHEMISMS...FOR 24-HOUR PROTECTION

IN GREEK mythology the goddesses of vengeance were pictured as three sisters with birdlike bodies, hair of writhing snakes, and blood dripping from their eyes. The Greeks were understandably terrified of this frightful trio—so terrified, in fact, that they feared even to mention each one by name. When they did refer to the gruesome sisters, it was as the "Eumenides"—the "kindly ones." By calling them "kindly," the Greeks hoped to keep them kindly.

In one incident in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck explains,

"Along about morning I borrowed a sheet and a white shirt off of the clothes line; . . . I called it borrowing because that was what pap called it; but Tom [Sawyer] said it wasn't borrowing, it was stealing."

Unkindly sisters are referred to as kindly, and stealing is softened to borrowing. Both these examples illustrate the language device known as *euphemism*.*

Euphemism—a softened, indirect expression used in place of one that seems too harsh or direct.

The euphemism, like the incantation, is based on the idea that words can alter things. This belief says that if an unpleasant thing is given a pleasant name, the thing becomes actually better in itself.

Of course, the facts that are behind the words do not change at all. A better sounding name does not make the thing it refers to any better. The frightful sisters do not become kindly just because they are called kindly. Stealing does not become borrowing simply because it is disguised with a better sounding name.

Yet these euphemisms do put a good face on two unpleasant matters. And by so doing, they can change our attitudes toward the things they stand for. The euphemisms can cause something to happen. This again is word magic in action.

Euphemism, a modern version of word magic, had its roots in ancient superstitions about words. Tribesmen changed their names after the names had been cursed. The ancient Hebrews avoided using the name *Satan* for fear he would appear. Vikings cowered before their magical runes. We modern people honor their superstitions with our euphemisms.

As pointed out before, we sometimes transfer our attitudes about the thing to the word that stands for it. The word then acquires the powers of the thing. If the thing is unappealing or unpleasant, the word becomes the same; and we often avoid using it.

The next step is that we substitute a better sounding word. For example, *muskrat* becomes *Hudson seal, white weasel* becomes *ermine*, and *garbage hauling* becomes *sanitation disposal*.

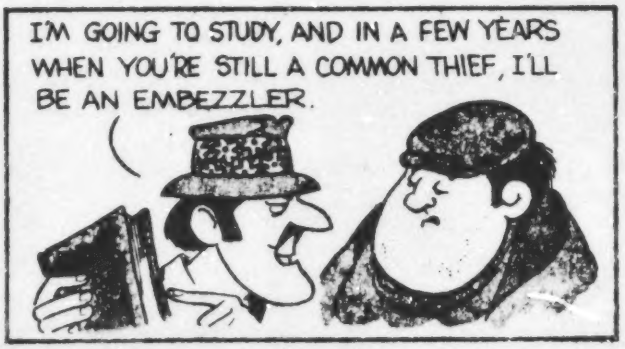
This is not to say that all euphemisms are evasions of the truth. Although some can be misleading and confusing, others can be serious and honest attempts to spare people's feelings on delicate subjects.

What is important to remember about euphemisms is this: The euphemized thing or idea should always be clearly understood. Then the verbal label or euphemism cannot disguise the actual thing.

Questions for Discussion:

1. A certain act can be termed "lying," or it can be termed "rearranging the truth." Which term is the euphemism?
2. What are the euphemisms used in the cartoons on this page?
3. In what way were the Greeks' feelings about the Eumenides like the Hebrews' feelings about Satan?
4. If someone takes something from you without your permission, you might call it stealing. If you took something from someone else, would that be borrowing?

* From the Greek prefix *eu* ("well" or "good") plus the root word *phēmē* meaning "speech."



"Lazy bum" is a harsh term to apply to a man who's an observer of the contemporary scene, your honor!
From Grin and Bear It by George Lichty Courtesy of Publishers Hall Syndicate

from-Semantics 2, Understanding Language, by Thomas Born

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Listen to taped commentaries and read written editorials. Discuss each in terms of the following:

1. What is this person's opinion?

2. What kinds of "loaded" words (euphemisms, words with connotations) does this commentator use?

3. What are some different words the commentator could have chosen to make his or her meaning different?

4. What is your opinion on this subject?

Find an editorial in a newspaper or magazine. Tape or glue it below. Then do the following:

1. Underline the euphemisms and words with strong connotations.
2. Make a list of 5 of the words from number one. Then write a different word for each which would have the opposite meaning.

Original Word	Your Word
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Editorial

P

Write your script by following the example below:

Time	Component	Announcer*
0:00-1:20	News Report: "On Saturday, Nov.5, 1979, two men were seen. . . .	Mary
1:21-3:40	Song: "America" "And now, here's a great tune "America" sung. . .	introduced by Bob

Time	Component	Announcer*

*Each person in the group should be an announcer for something.

Before production, a discussion should be held about speaking to an audience. Voice tone, loudness and clarity should be discussed. It is also important that students go to their taping prepared. To aid students in their preparations, a script should be completed (see P) before they begin taping. The writing of this script provides an opportunity to use writing skills-therefore, good spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure should be emphasized.

A practice session is recommended before the group does the actual taping.